

REMARKS

The present Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed August 28, 2006, in the above-identified application.

As an initial matter, Applicants acknowledge and appreciate the Examiner's allowance of claims 71-80, and the Examiner's indication that claims 84-85 and 90 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In the present Amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 1-6, 9, 11-13, 15-18, 20, 22, 69-70 and 84. In addition, Applicants have amended claim 81 to incorporate the limitations of claim 84 therein, amended claim 85 to depend from claim 81 and have added new claims 101-106. New claims 101-103 depend from independent claim 71, which the Examiner indicated is allowed. New claims 104-106 depend from independent claim 81. New claims 101-106 are fully supported by the originally filed specification, add no new matter, and are presented to more specifically cover one or more preferred embodiments of the present invention.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 9, 11-13, 15-18, 20, 22, and 69-70 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,360,431 to Puno et al. The Examiner also rejected claims 81, 83, 86-89, 91 and 95-97 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by WO 97/376042 to Link. In addition, the Examiner rejected claims 82, 92-94 and 98-100 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Link in view of Puno.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's rejection of the claims under Puno and/or Link. In the interest of advancing prosecution of the present application, however, Applicants have canceled claims 1-6, 9, 11-13, 15-18, 20, 22 and

69-70. Applicants reserve the right to file these claims in a continuing application.

As noted above, Applicants have amended claim 81 to incorporate the limitations of claim 84 therein, which the Examiner indicated contained allowable matter. In view of the above-noted amendments, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 71-83 and 85-100 are allowable. New claims 101-103 are allowable, *inter alia*, by virtue of their dependence from claim 71. New claims 104-106 are allowable, *inter alia*, by virtue of their dependence from claim 81, which is allowable for the reasons set forth above.

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Office Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that she telephone Applicants' attorney at (908) 654-5000.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested Amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

Dated: September 27, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By Michael J. Doherty

Michael J. Doherty

Registration No.: 40,592

LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG,

KRUMHOLZ & MENTLIK, LLP

600 South Avenue West

Westfield, New Jersey 07090

(908) 654-5000

Attorney for Applicants